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CHAPTER XV

SPIRITS AND VOWS

The Rwala believe that besides this visible world there is also an invisible, or spiritual, world. The spiritual world is again divided into a celestial and an earthly world. The inhabitants of the celestial world are called *malak* (pl., *malâjika*), those of the spiritual earthly world *ğânn* (pl., *ğinn*). Both the celestial and earthly spirits were created by Allâh. They possess bodies similar to human bodies but invisible; they can pass through any wall and can cover in a short while a distance which even a good rider would travel in barely a month. The spirits hear, speak, eat, drink, and ride like any Bedouin but feel no pain, are never sick, and cannot die.

The celestial spirits do not leave heaven except when sent by Allâh to men. A *malak* announcing Allâh's will to the Bedouin is called *munâbi*, spokesman. He does so only during a dream, whether natural or artificial, the latter occurring when a waking person falls into ecstasy, *islâm*, under the influence of music or dancing.

THE ĞINN

To the earthly spirits, *ğinn*, *harâfil*, or *ğenûn*, heaven is not accessible. They are of both sexes and have big eyes extending to the corners of their mouths. The food they prefer is raw meat, *nej*, and fresh blood is their favorite drink. The raw meat they get from fallen animals, the blood is left for them by the Bedouins every time an animal is killed. The *ğinn* are divided into tribes, clans, and families like the Bedouins, but in reality are settlers, *ḥaẓar*. They live in high mountains, inaccessible ravines, and old ruins. They never have tents. Their dens are situated underground in rock crevices, caverns, and vaults of deserted buildings. The farther such a ravine or ruin is from the water, the better it is liked by the spirits, who know that they will not be disturbed there. They occupy themselves in raising goats and sheep, which their herdsmen pasture in regions so rocky and stony that the goats and sheep

775 Thus it remains till the *ḥbâṭa* sacrifice has been brought, after which the body takes its place in the grave and the *nesem* departs, no one knows where.

775 673 After the *ẓaḥijje* sacrifice Allâh weighs both the good deeds, *ḥasanateh*, and the sins of the deceased, *sajâteh radijje*. Allâh punishes sins: *az-zena*, which means sexual intercourse with a girl betrothed to another or with another's wife, for that is a betrayal, *bowḳ*, of persons to whom the females belong; *al-ḫowne*, the robbery of a guest or companion who has trusted one while on the road; *ḏabḥ az-zelema*, killing of a man not subject to the blood feud or of an enemy who did not attack one; *az-zelîme*, false testimony under oath before the court. These four sins alone are punished by Allâh both in this world and hereafter. In this world he punishes by disease, by sending robbers against the sinner's estate; by taking away his sons, or by having him murdered. In weighing these sins and good deeds, the weight of the *ḥbâṭa* and *ẓaḥijje* sacrifices is added; also of the kettle in which the flesh was cooked; of the three stones, *ḥawâdi*, supporting the kettle; of all the utensils used in preparing the supper; of the fuel, as well as of everything that was laden on the she-camel sacrificed on the holiday of the commemoration of all departed, *az-ẓaḥijje*. The Rwejli is certain that, as far as he is concerned, the scales will always dip in his favor and that he will enter paradise intact with both his body and his soul, *nesem*. He that falls in war needs neither the *ḥbâṭa* nor the *ẓaḥijje*, for all his sins were washed off with his blood. A murdered man, too, goes directly to paradise, because his sins fall on the head of the murderer, unless the latter was destined by Allâh to punish the murdered man for his sins.

HELL AND PARADISE

772 775 Paradise is somewhere below ground. There it rains regularly, there is always *rabî'*, abundance, good pasture, *ḫejr*, and there also the moon shines all the time. In paradise all the Rwala live together, are young, and never grow older. They can marry there and have grown children at once. Every one has a big tent, big herds, and many children. They raid hostile tribes which have been condemned to hell, where all enemies of the Rwala are sent.

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Hell is situated either on the sun or in some other place above the earth. There the sun scorches by day and night, rains are very rare, the breeding of camels meets with no success, the soil has to be irrigated artificially — and the Bedouins there must work long and hard. They serve the *fellâḥîn*, have to obey the government, are conscripted, perform military duty, and Allâh himself knows all their torments. Some call hell *ḏalfât* and think that in that place neither the moon nor the stars ever shine.

Allâh dwells in both paradise and hell. He is omnipresent, hears and sees everything, but is himself invisible. With Allâh's permission even the dead may leave either paradise or hell and visit their kin, to whom they appear in dreams.

In the belief of the Bedouins and the Ṣlejb there is somewhere far beyond the horizon a tall moutain on each side of the earth. One half of each mountain rests on *terra firma*, the other half in the sea, into which it sinks abruptly, while towards the land it sends out a sharp spur called *ḥašm*. These four mountains carry the whole firmament. During the rainy season the spirits and even Allâh himself prefer to dwell near the southern mountain, which the Arabs call *aš-šerḳ*, as it is supposed to be situated in the inner desert. In summer, however, Allâh moves with all the spirits to the northern mountain, *jeṛarrebow*.